

Illinois' surviving

KRESGE

By PAM ADAMS
of the Journal Star

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Sit down at Kresge's dinette counter on any weekday morning. Carol or Edda will ask you what you want to order. Frank Shahan Jr. probably will be there. Gloria Green will be slipping on her coat to hurry to Baker's Shoe Store where she works. Clarence "Andy" Anderson will have taken a bus all the way from the South Side to Sheridan Village just so he can sit at the counter and taunt Edda about her age.

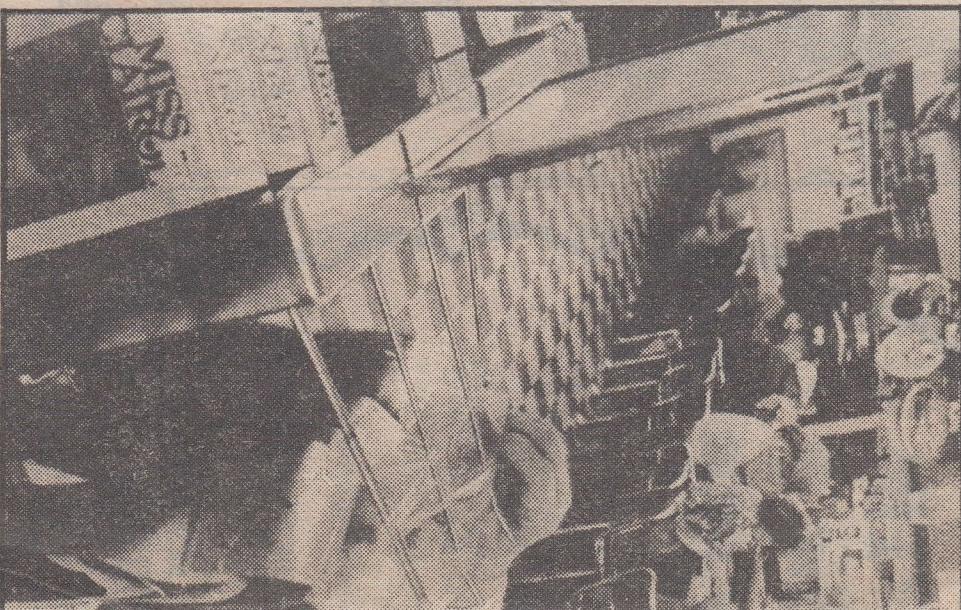
None of them will give a straight answer about their age or how long they've been meeting at the well-worn counter with the old-fashioned red vinyl-covered stools. They take these meetings in good-natured stride, nothing special to them about gathering every morning at the last Kresge in Illinois.

Last year, the Kresge at 112th and Michigan in Chicago closed — making the Kresge in Sheridan Village the oldest Kresge in Illinois, the only Kresge in Illinois and the best Kresge in Illinois. Any number of adjectives fit when there is only one.

There were no major announcements, no special plaques hung on the wall of the Peoria store honoring its endurance.

The number of Kresge stores nationwide dwindled from a peak of about 800 in the early 1960s to about 75 today. The variety stores' closings followed the decline of downtowns in most cities.

And the people who ran the Kresge chain saw early on that downtown five-and-dime variety stores were on



Betty Cage began working at Kresge's 31 years ago and plans to retire next month. Kresge's in